**Safe and Sound Protocol (SSP)**

**Information Sheet for clients.**

Developed by **Dr Stephen Porges,** the SSP is a five-day intervention designed to reduce stress and auditory sensitivity while enhancing capacity for social engagement and emotional resilience.

By calming the physiological and emotional state, a neurological doorway may be opened for improving communication and thus lead towards more successful therapy and learning.

The SSP is a research-based therapy which is showing significant results in just five days in the following areas:

* **Social and emotional difficulties**
* **Auditory sensitivities**
* **Anxiety and trauma related challenges**
* **Inattention**
* **Stressors that impact adversely on social engagement**

Emotional and physiological state are critical to how we approach the situation at hand. So, when a person has better internal state control, not only can they be more socially engaged, they are more open to therapy and to new learning.

Better state regulation improves therapeutic and educational outcomes.

**HOW DOES IT WORK?**

Based on Dr. Porges’ Polyvagal Theory, the program is derived from nearly four decades of research on the relationship between the autonomic nervous system and social-emotional processes. It is designed to stimulate nervous system regulation by exercising and systematically challenging the auditory system with specifically processed music.

The music trains the auditory pathways by focusing on the frequency envelope of human speech. As the client learns to process these speech-related frequencies, they improve the functioning of two cranial nerves that are important for promoting overall social behavior. Cranial Nerve VII (Facial Nerve) helps clients focus on human voice and tune out irrelevant frequencies. Cranial Nerve X (Vagus Nerve) enables self-soothing and autonomic regulation.

Following successful completion of the intervention, individuals will be better able to focus in school, therapy, and everyday life and experience a calmed emotional and physiological state.  This is based on studies that suggest that skills such as attention, state regulation and the ability to engage socially will be enhanced.

**WHAT IS INVOLVED?**

This non-invasive intervention involves listening to filtered music\* that has been processed specifically to retune the nervous system (regulating state) to introduce a sense of safety and the ability to socially engage. This allows the person to better interpret not only human speech, but, importantly, the emotional meaning of language. Once interpersonal interactions improve, spontaneous social behaviours and an enhanced ability to learn, self-regulate and engage socially are often seen.

*“The Safe and Sound Protocol is intended to accelerate the effectiveness of other modalities by preparing the person’s emotional and physiological state for engagement.”*

\*The music for the intervention uses familiar songs which have been specially filtered and modulated to remove high and low frequency wavebands, keeping the sounds to within the bandwidth of human speech (prosody) – specifically to the soothing frequencies which signal safety and calmness to the processes of neuroception (the neurological systems which are involved in detecting threat and safety). Effectively the SSP directly gives the body the cues for neurological safety.

The SSP involves listening to a specially formulated sequence of filtered music for one hour on five consecutive days. The filtered music is played through headphones on audio equipment (MP3 player) in a quiet and safe environment. The person having the SSP intervention is accompanied by a safe other person. During the intervention hour, the two will not engage in any conversation, but they may choose to engage in a number of creative activities, either separately or together.

For any further questions, please contact Anna Magee by email at annamagee123@gmail.com or phone on 07917301336